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First to Last—the Truth: News—Editorials—Advertisements

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"The Freedom of the Seas"

President Wilson intends to sail next week for France. Is he going to carry with him, locked up in his bosom, the meaning of his demand on the peace conference for "the freedom of the seas"?

The President has injected this phrase into the peace council; but he has never offered any definition of it. The second of his fourteen peace conditions reads:

> II. Absolute freedom of navigation upon the seas outside territorial waters, alike in peace and in war, except as the seas may be closed in whole or in part by international action for the enforcement of international covenants.

The Allied governments could not interpret this language. When they accepted Germany's proposal to make peace on the basis of Mr. Wilson's fourteen articles they felt obliged to reserve assent to a stipulation which they did not understand. In a memorandum which they sent to Washington this notice was given:

> They (the Allied powers) must point out, however, that Clause 2, relating to what is usually described as the freedom of the seas, is open to various interpretations, some of which they could not accept. They must therefore reserve to themselves complete freedom on this subject when they enter the peace conference.

In his note of November 5 to the German government, transmitting the Allied memorandum and announcing that Marshal Foch was ready to discuss armistice terms, Secretary Lansing said: "I am instructed by the President to say that he is in agreement with the interpretation set forth in the last paragraph of the memorandum quoted." The last paragraph covered the additional Allied demand for compensation for damage done to the civilian populations of the Allies and their property by German land, sea and air operations. This language seemed to imply that the President was not in agreement with the Allied reservation on the subject of the freedom of the seas.

At all events, the Allies do not know what President Wilson meant by "freedom of navigation upon the seas outside territorial waters, alike in peace and in war." Nor does the American public know. Yet everybody ought to be permitted to know, according to the President's own declarations in behalf of open diplomacy.

Article I of the fourteen conditions says: "Diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view." Why, then, have we not had long ago an official elucidation of the meaning of Paragraph II?

In his "peace without victory" address to Congress on January 22, 1917, Mr. Wilson said: "The paths of the sea must alike in law and in fact be free. The freedom of the seas is the *sine qua non* of peace, equality and coöperation."

He also said: "No doubt, a somewhat practical reconsideration of many of the rules of international practice hitherto sought to be established may be necessary in order to make the seas indeed free and common in practically all circumstances for the use of mankind, but the motive for such changes is convincing and compelling."

These are grandiose ideas. Yet *The Evening Post* is still trying to convince itself and the country that all the President has in mind is the immunity of non-contraband private property at sea. Recent developments of belligerent power at sea have made such immunity of infinitesimal value. So long as a belligerent has the right to extend the contraband list indefinitely, to impose direct and indirect blockades, to refuse coal to neutral shipping and to take over practically the merchant marines of all neutral nations the immunity of private property at sea remains a shrunken legal abstraction.

The programme which Mr. Wilson stands for, says *The Post*, "has nothing whatever to do with the right of naval blockade or the definition of contraband." Then it cannot guarantee anything but a shadow of neutral sea rights. It cannot make the seas any freer than they were when the war ended, with all the commerce of the world under the military control of the Allies.

Can Mr. Wilson and Mr. Lansing be supposed to be advocating so minute an alteration in the code of sea warfare? It seems incredible, in view of the President's spacious phraseology.

Every intelligent student of international law knows what a genuine freedom of the seas involves. A perfectly clear statement of the essentials of such freedom was given in an article in the April number of *The American Journal of International Law*. It read: "Freedom of the seas means abolition of contraband and commercial blockades and the right of capture or destruction of enemy merchant vessels."

How could it mean anything less? That is the construction of the phrase which the Germans have always had in view. They needed freedom of that sort. Had they enjoyed it from August, 1914, on they would never have lost the war.

Does our government share this latitudinarian view of the freedom of the seas, with its corollary of the abolition of naval power? Nobody can be sure. Are our peace delegates to go to Paris pledged to a programme never revealed to the American public?

An explanation is due the people. It is also due the Senate—a coördinate branch of the treaty-making power. It should have been given when the fourteen articles were first put forward as the basis of peace which our government favored.

It is very late now to issue an authentic interpretation.

But better late than never.

The Ebb Tide

What Mr. David Lawrence thinks is less important than what he does, as a symptom of how the Wilsonians are feeling. When he turns upon his hero and prophet, the President, and lectures him on personal government there can be little doubt of what has happened. The tide has, indeed, turned. The rush to swim ashore has become known to even David Lawrence.

That other perfect organ of Wilsonianism, *The New York Times*, does not turn so quickly. But it is turning. It devoted the bulk of its editorial page yesterday to damning the President's peace trip, after discussing calmly such thoughts as "the belief or prejudice that Mr. Wilson habitually prefers mediocrity."

What has happened? What does it all mean?

The example of Mr. McAdoo looms up over the nearby landscape. Every one is too kindly disposed toward him to accept his explanation of his resignation literally. He has been making a huge personal sacrifice for too long to permit the public to believe that he is primarily self-seeking and would abandon posts where he is needed if he felt he could in truth and honor retain them. Of course, Mr. McAdoo, like other public men, may have utterly deceived us all by the simple device of telling the truth. But that is not Washington's view. That is not the country's view. It is plainly not Mr. David Lawrence's view.

We have only to go back a short while to see the magnitude of the change. The best expression of Mr. Wilson's old attitude, the frankest statement of his self-confidence at its height, is to be found in a naïve appeal which he made for the Liberty Loan on October 15. Here was Wilsonianism at its highest tide:

> I earnestly request every patriotic American to leave to the governments of the United States and of the Allies the momentous discussions initiated by Germany and to remember that for each man his duty is to strengthen the hands of these governments and to do it in the most important way now immediately presented—by subscribing to the utmost of his ability for bonds of the fourth Liberty Loan.

The American people were to pay and Mr. Wilson was to make peace. Mr. David Lawrence might interpret a little and now and then when directed clear away ambiguities, about Alsace-Lorraine and what not. But—no discussion, if you please!

Looking back, it is easy to see that Election Day was the turning point. Mr. Wilson made the issue an utterly personal one; he insisted upon victory for Wilsonianism—or defeat. "The return of a Republican majority to either house of the Congress would, moreover, be interpreted on the other side of the water as a repudiation of my leadership," he declared.

He lost both houses, and the interpretation on both sides of the water has been exactly what Mr. Wilson insisted upon. He goes abroad, if and when he goes abroad, a rebuked and discredited leader. No wonder that his faithfulest chronicler and interpreter is compelled to write in haste—lest he be left alone upon the quarterdeck—that the "morale of his friends is at a low ebb."

Ebb is the word.

The Chile-Peru Flare-Up

The present friction between Peru and Chile is the outgrowth of a grievance of thirty-five years' standing. Peru has an Irredenta in the Tacna and Arica districts, taken from her by Chile after the war of 1879-'83.

Chile got into a dispute with Bolivia over the development of the nitrate deposits in the Bolivian maritime province of Antofagasta. Peru, having similar nitrate holdings further north, became involved in the quarrel. Chile overwhelmed both the Bolivians and the Peruvians, finally occupying Lima.

In the treaties of peace Bolivia ceded outright all her frontage on the Pacific. Peru ceded in perpetuity the province of Tarapaca, and yielded Tacna and Arica for ten years, the inhabitants having the right thereafter to determine their national allegiance by a plebiscite.

The ten years of probation expired in 1893. But Chile, on one pretext or another, postponed the vote. It has not yet been taken. Peru has tried repeatedly by diplomatic means to secure an execution of the treaty. Failing in this, she finally withdrew her minister from Santiago.

The Tacna and Arica districts are more than an Alsace-Lorraine, because Peru never surrendered absolute title to them. Chile holds them by force, and her government is apparently satisfied to continue holding them on that basis. The situation is one which breeds irritation and warlike passions.

The United States will probably join with other leading American powers in offering mediation. War should be avoided, since the plebiscite which Chile promised offers an equitable solution of the dispute. A South American struggle over a question of "self-determination" would be a queer preliminary to a world peace conference which is to settle many similar questions in Europe.

But we must reckon with bitter national enmities and prejudices in this controversy. Its emergence is another powerful argument against the prolonged absence from Washington of the President and the Secretary of State.

Our Anti-Bolshevik Army

Of all the points made by the rumpus at Madison Square Garden the only big one, the one worth all the bumps and bruises, is the demonstrated fact that the soldiers and sailors of America are anti-Bolshevik, anti-red, anti all the crazy-headed anarchy rampant in the name of Trotzky and Lenine and the new Russian autocracy.

The bumps and bruises will heal themselves. No one peacably desiring to assemble in American fashion was seriously interfered with. It was only those looking for trouble who met real trouble. The whole meeting was designed to be provocative of disorder, and in that sense all who attended it might have expected trouble. As a matter of fact, the men in uniforms both inside and outside showed a fine American sense and humor in singling out, so far as possible, actual "redness" for rebuke.

The episode makes it clear that Bolshevik gatherings will be for a good while a frank invitation to riot and disorder. No municipal police force, no military police can cope with the sort of clear-headed, justifiable wrath which our men in uniform displayed. We are certainly not going to turn our streets into battlefields and subject the peaceable citizens of our town to the risk of pitched fights merely to enable a few thousands malcontents to vent a vague sympathy with murder and anarchy.

It is especially interesting that a number of observers reported a good sprinkling of East Siders among the soldiers. The sooner our men return the better. They have been closer to the German idea, closer to the Bolshevik idea, than any of us. And they seem to have learned a wisdom good to see. The notion of the dear "intellectual" that a "red" army was returning to rend us proves to have just as much fact in it as most "intellectual" premonitions.

We shall have our fringe of Bolsheviks. But our fighting men who have seen what war is and know what order and nationalism mean will not be of it.

The Tangle of the Cables

The more the seizure of the cables is considered the less the wisdom or urgency appears. The armistice had been signed. There was no grave exigency. And now diplomatic difficulties appear. It hardly seems probable that other countries will allow this government to have control of cables from their shores, and these the only means of quick communication, save wireless, with the rest of the world. And all the Atlantic cables except one run from other shores than our own. There is only one line direct from the United States to Europe. The others run from Canada or the French Isle of St. Pierre. All that can be taken over save this single direct wire is the tail ends of the others. These would still be under the jurisdiction, and in any case of difficulty under the control, of the Canadian or British and French government.

This is the practical side of the matter. More important still is the political side. This belated seizure seemed rather a drive for additional power than a clear necessity. The war is made a pretext for every kind of governmental extension and apparently for precipitating this country into governmental ownership whether it has a will or no. We are already undertaking one tremendous experiment. That is the government operation of the greatest railway system in the world. The results to date are by no means clear. And this is true also of the government's essay in the management of the telegraphs. Meanwhile another experiment in governmental activity is currently reported to be in a highly chaotic state, and that is the operation of the express companies. It is not clear why the government should take on more problems with these very large ones unsolved.

And there are some excellent reasons why it should not. This country has achieved a marvellous success and the unquestioned primacy in the industrial and economic world without governmental interference or the methods of a Prussian bureaucracy. There do not seem very vital reasons why we should begin to dabble in them now.

Already the machinery of war is being put to peaceful uses. Seven motor trucks have been released by the War Department to carry mails on the 115-mile route between Helper and Vernal, Utah. By paying discharged soldier drivers $4 a day it is estimated the government, using its own trucks, can cut the cost of delivery in two. As army demobilization proceeds several hundred more trucks will be taken over by the Postoffice Department.

Art Note from Kansas

(From The St. Louis Globe Democrat)

A man at Mulvane, Kan., seeing a picture of the Venus de Milo on the back of a magazine, wanted to know if that represented another war atrocity.

SHOES & SHIPS & SEALING WAX

HOME COMING

Once on an evening, clear and chill,
When earth was growing austere and old,
The wind ran keen o'er the western hill,
Where sunset faded in palest gold.
The leaves fled fast from November's wrath
As dusk came winging on pinions fleet;
The ever-ascending, frost-bound path
Rang like metal beneath my feet.
And then—the end of the uphill track
And gleaming windows that bade me come
In from the world that lay cold and black
Into the light and the warmth of home.
And there in the firelight's witchery
You stood with your hands held out to me.

So time creeps on, till the upward way
That leads from here to the hill's dark crest
Will seem more steep than the path that day;
And when from the summit I face the west,
Where sunset is fading pale and clear
And cold that never November knew
Walks through a world all brown and sere,
I like to believe that, a-glimmer through
The terrible shadows of utter night,
I'll mark the sign that I need not roam—
The gleam of the fire and the candle light—
Calling and calling the wanderer home.
Daily, I pray at the door I see
You, with your hands held out to me.

* * *

The Bolsheviki are gaining control of Germany, and those who wondered how she ever could be punished sufficiently are answered.

* * *

BACK HOME STUFF

Uncle Jimmie Helker

Uncle Jimmie Helker took care of all the sick back home. He walked to town from Clay Center every morning, rain or shine, and he always had the same greeting for every man. It was: "Howdy, brother; howdy?"

Uncle Jimmie had a heavy beard. He never cut the nails on his little fingers. When he was not attending the sick he used to lay flagstone pavements or work as a cutter at the marble yard.

Around Clay Center and Buck Ridge some of the older people, including Granny Heisner, said it was Uncle Jimmie Helker who tied the bell on the buzzard that was heard at different times through Indiana, Ohio and Kentucky, and about which Irvin Cobb wrote his famous story.

Uncle Jimmie was the first man to go aboard the steamer John Porter when the packet brought yellow fever back home and started the plague in the Ohio Valley. He was quarantined on the steamer and was there for ninety-six days. Doctor Cromlish used to leave medicine on the river bank and Uncle Jimmie would row in at midnight and take it back.

After young Ben Caldish inherited his money and got to drinking and using drugs Uncle Jimmie was appointed his guardian, and they were always together until young Caldish was taken to the state asylum. Uncle Jimmie finally got to acting queer. He tried to walk in from Clay Center one night during the blizzard and froze his feet. He used to go to the Baptist church and would get up and talk in a rambling way. He finally got so feeble he couldn't leave his house. Nobody ever went to see him except Chot Young, the rural mail carrier.

OOM.

* * *

MORE HORRORS

Now southward treads the war god stark.
Why—pardon please our silliness—
Would not Peru's much-touted bark
Be cure for Chile's chilliness?

* * *

If we are to judge by the Madison Square affair, Uncle Sam's soldiers and sailors are now engaged in recruiting for the American Red Guard.

F. F. V.

Seeing Red

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: What claim has the red flag to a place on our streets among the flags of nations?

What ideals does it represent? Judging by Russia, it represents loot, destruction and murder, the pillaging of those who have been able to construct by those who are able only to destroy; the tyranny of the few over the many.

Its votaries will tell you that this blood-red color symbolizes the brotherhood of man. But are we anxious to assert our blood brotherhood with all men, for instance, with the Fuegans, the Hottentots, the head hunters of Borneo or the outer barbarians who have lately warred on men like scientific Indians and on women and children like none but themselves? Do we wish to claim brotherhood with these, or with the tiger, the hog, the skunk or the rat, whose blood is also red?

Red is the most exciting of all colors, the most dangerous in suggestion to that large class of paranoiacs whose desire for bloodshed, whose tendency to "see red," is just under the surface. No matter what those who carry it say, the red flag is the symbol of violence. It has no more place on our streets than placards openly advocating plunder and killing, and is probably more dangerous in suggestion than any such open incitements would be.

H. A. CAPARN.

New York, Nov. 23, 1918.

Another Army to Demobilize

(From The Atchison Globe)

One of the problems faced by this country is, What are we going to do with all the public speakers created by the war?

BRITANNIA

A Cartoon in celebration of Britain Day, Dec. 7, drawn for the Britain Day Committee by Carton Moore Park

Clemenceau—The Victor

By Frank H. Simonds

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THE entrance of Pétain into Metz, of Castelnau into Colmar and of Gouraud into Strasbourg, and the hardly less moving return of Hirschauer to his native city of Mulhouse at the head of a French army, these ceremonies marking the coming of France to her "lost provinces," have been necessarily military in character. It was the right of the soldiers who made the great triumph possible to ride at the head of their victorious armies into the reconquered cities of Alsace and lost Lorraine. Yet even the soldiers, great as has been their achievement, must yield to the claims of a civilian when history comes to bestow the final palm for the restoration of France.

Not even Foch would deny the fact that his military victories would have been impossible but for the aid, the support, the unfailing assistance of Georges Clemenceau. It is to this wonderful old man, this republican of republicans, that France, in the last analysis, must return thanks for present possession of Alsace-Lorraine. Forty-seven years ago, when Thiers and Favre sorrowfully yielded to Bismarck and put their names to the document which made the sacrifice formal, Georges Clemenceau was one of the French Deputies who protested against the act, proclaimed that the representatives of the nation had no right to surrender any portion of its territories or of its citizens, and now, after almost half a century, as the civil chief of his nation he has made good his protest.

Looking back over the little more than a year that Clemenceau has been the civil executive of France, the Prime Minister, it is possible to measure his achievement. He came to office when the army had failed at the Aisne and for the first and only time was shaken in its morale. He came to power when a monstrous defeatist campaign had begun to march over France. He came to control when the reins of government had slipped from impotent hands and first a break on the home front and then on the firing line was forecast on all sides.

Not willingly, moreover, did France turn to Clemenceau. His strength all men recognized, but his strength and his weakness alike terrified his contemporaries. If his eloquence in his newspaper had again and again roused the nation, his long history of political struggle had made enemies, and his destructive course over half a century had left him with few political friends and a host of enemies.

"Briand will fail and go, there may be another, and then will come Clemenceau, who will try and fail, and then—then I will come." This was what Caillaux said in Rome in 1917. The whole game was set up for Caillaux to come and to make peace with Germany when Clemenceau came—but he did not fail, he has not fallen. Caillaux is behind bars, Malvy in exile, the lesser defeatists have faced firing squads or fled—and French armies are in Strasbourg and Metz.

The first, the impossible, task of Clemenceau when he came was to restore the home front, shaken by defeat in the field and by defeatist propaganda behind the lines. France, after all the terrible sacrifices of past years, with the Russian revolution destroying her great Eastern ally, with a new invasion in sight, faced a crisis which had but two solutions—collapse or the discovery of a leader. France, the true France, was as sound and determined as ever, but without leadership nothing more was possible.

But how shall one describe the miracle of Clemenceau's leadership! Almost in an hour the atmosphere cleared. Backed by Clemenceau, Pétain reorganized the army; single-handed Clemenceau wrestled with the traitors and the weaklings. To every protest, to every feeble whine, he responded—"Je fais la guerre." Ask him questions, make motions in the Chambre, seek to trap and entangle him, the answer was ever clearer and clearer—"I make war, I make war." "The victory is to the side which lasts to the last quarter of an hour."

The defeats of the spring left him unshaken. He faced hostile critics in the Chambre with the dust and mud of the battlefields on his clothes. He left the tribune to reappear in the front line. He was as scornful of personal danger as he was impatient of petty intrigue. The armies knew him better than the politicians. His spirit was the spirit of his countrymen, but seeing it revealed in him, his countrymen acquired new confidence.

When the line broke in Picardy he was almost the first on the scene, and brought back to Paris the first authentic news that the flood had been checked. It was the same in Flanders when Haig's army stood with its back to the wall. "The skies are already brightening," he told Paris, as he returned from Bethune.

"There was a time," Clemenceau once said to me, "when I despaired of my countrymen. I believed France was finished—but now—now, look about for yourself. I have not one word to say." That was in the Verdun time. That was in the hour when he was daily thundering "The Germans are at Noyon." Then and thereafter his confidence in his countrymen was immeasurable; his impatience at the mistakes, the lack of courage, the blindness beyond restraint for three years, ever growing shriller, his voice thundered forth the warnings and the denunciations provoked by the little men and the weak men.

And at last, with ruin in full sight, France turned to Clemenceau, as the Allies, spurred by his urgings, turned to Foch in the presence of military disaster. And when Clemenceau came France was again the cornerstone of the alliance, the foundation on which victory was built. He became, almost in an hour, the embodiment of France; and before the end those who had opposed him shrank from challenging the man whose voice was the voice of the nation. In defeat he made the nation believe victory possible, and when victory came it seemed but the logical conclusion of his leadership.

This war has produced more great generals than brilliant statesmen, and the achievement of one general, the victory of Foch, is a far-shining triumph which will endure through all history; yet without Clemenceau Foch would have failed, and I believe that when France comes to decide to whom she owes her "lost provinces" she will unhesitatingly recognize the gift as that of the man of seventy-seven who forbade the cession in 1871 and redeemed the loss in 1918.

In a Swiss Mirror

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: My attention has been called to an article entitled "In a Swiss Mirror," which was published in your issue of November 14. It is an extract from the "Zürcher Morgenzeitung," an obscure paper which has recently been founded in Zurich. The article, very unfriendly in tone to the United States, would hardly be worthy of notice if its title did not tend to give it an undue importance and to create the impression that it truly voiced the sentiments of at least a large part of the Swiss people. This impression would be entirely erroneous. Never in the history of our country have the Swiss people been so enthusiastically pro-American as they have been in the course of the last year. There is perhaps at the present time not a single subject in the realm of foreign politics on which all Swiss so unanimously agree as in their admiration for, gratitude toward and cordial sympathy with their great American sister republic. The paper from which you quote has recently been attacked by the influential and patriotic press of Germanic Switzerland as serving foreign interests. Its editors were peculiarly ill-advised when they undertook to assail the attitude of your country at the present time, as that alone would suffice to brand them in Switzerland as anti-Swiss.

I can assure you, sir, that if your readers could see the soul of Switzerland they would discover sentiments very different from those reflected "In a Swiss Mirror."

Let us hope that the victory which has made the world safe for democracy will also protect Switzerland against German propaganda in the future. Such involuntary misrepresentation as both you, sir, and we have been victims of, in the present case will then be avoided.

WILLIAM E. RAPPARD,
Professor at the University of Geneva, Switzerland.
Legation of Switzerland, Washington, D. C., Nov. 23, 1918.